

Lincoln h. 572.

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foliage above; a sedate and natural harmony proper to the place and all that it signifies."

I noticed that the headstones of a humble height bore no eulogies, or texts or hymns. Their plain surfaces are simply graved with the names of those whom they commemorate with such reserve and decency. We saw William Penn's name and that of his first wife Gulielma, whom he had met hard by at Chalfont, and we read the names of his children; the monuments were set very close together.

On this May evening, sitting beneath a high ash-tree in this field of forgotten and unforgotten dead, we spoke of fancies, of impressions, but no more of facts. We spoke of the contrast between this place and those other enclosures where men have displayed their pretensions and their arrogance, and have, as it were, challenged mortality and flaunted their possessions in the face of death. Through the solemn candelabra-like lime-trees at the head of the graveyard, we caught a white vision of fruit trees, from which

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the blasts of May were wafting petals like snow upon the emerald turf, and with a certain sense of fitness we heard the voice of the custodian telling some wanderer of "Friend Joseph Rule, who had white hair, a white suit and carried a white Bible under his arm when preaching—and when he died the snow fell so fast upon his coffin that he was proved the white Quaker to the end."

"Glad and grave is this garden of souls," said Serena, "planted informally with flowers and natural mounds, as God alone plants the acres that are left to Him."

She rose to go, and with one last look I turned to follow.

The old hollies at the angle of the field loomed black against the budding hawthorne; an occasional Lent lily and cowslip reared their heads above the sheltering grass, a robin trilled on Gulielma's grave.

I had never thought to have occasion to be grateful to Czar Peter, but, from to-day, I look upon him as my friend.

Una Birch.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN.*

When an American Ambassador wishes to make a sure appeal to English hearts and minds he cannot do better than speak of Abraham Lincoln, because in Lincoln were drawn together and perfected all the characteristics of Anglo-Saxondom. He was more than a great American (as an American writer has truly said); he gave absolute practicability to the virtues which have emerged through centuries as most praiseworthy in those

* "Abraham Lincoln, and other Addresses in England." By Joseph H. Choate, New York: The Century Co.—"Abraham Lincoln." By Whitelaw Reid. London: Harrison and Sons.

who use the English tongue. He had tremendous resolution yet great patience; he was just yet tender; he was indulgent yet knew how to be stern; he had the power of understanding the arguments of his opponents and never distorted them; he harbored no bitterness against those whom he set out to defeat; and finally he had a superb moderation which distinguished instinctively the essential from the unessential, and made solutions as easy as might be while principles were never sacrificed. Mr. Choate tells us, in the introduction to his most useful and

agreeable collection of addresses delivered in England when he was Ambassador here, that he had only one instruction from President McKinley. That was to use all his powers to promote friendliness between Great Britain and the United States. His success is fresh in our memory. "I thought," he writes, "that one effective way of carrying out this instruction was to do what I could to make the people better acquainted with the United States, its history, its institutions, and its great men." Accordingly, he accepted genially and readily invitations to address learned societies all over the country, and the addresses in this book are the result. He places Lincoln first in his collection, and, of course, he is right. There is no address, by the way, on Washington. Besides Lincoln we have Benjamin Franklin, Alexander Hamilton and Emerson. Among the other addresses we must mention those on the Supreme Court and Education in America. Mr. Whitelaw Reid in due course succeeded Mr. Choate; and he too knows the eternal interest of Englishmen in Lincoln. Lincoln was the subject of his address to Birmingham University at the end of last year. The subject, it is true, was chosen for him, but if he had been left to himself we think he would scarcely have liked to choose any other. His protestations to the contrary only mean that he felt it difficult to say anything new about Lincoln.

Both Mr. Choate and Mr. Whitelaw Reid knew Lincoln personally. They were young men then, but their recollections are quite clear. Mr. Choate first heard Lincoln at the famous Cooper Institute meeting. He says:—

It is now forty years since I first saw and heard Abraham Lincoln, but the impression which he left on my mind is ineffaceable. After his great successes in the West he came to New

York to make a political address. He appeared in every sense of the word like one of the plain people among whom he loved to be counted. At first sight there was nothing impressive or imposing about him—except that his great stature singled him out from the crowd; his clothes hung awkwardly on his giant frame, his face was of a dark pallor, without the slightest tinge of color; his seamed and rugged features bore the furrows of hardship and struggle; his deep-set eyes looked sad and anxious, his countenance in repose gave little evidence of that brain power which had raised him from the lowest to the highest station among his 'countrymen. As he talked to me before the meeting, he seemed ill at ease, with that sort of apprehension which a young man might feel before presenting himself to a new and strange audience whose critical disposition he dreaded. It was a great audience, including all the noted men—all the learned and cultured—of his party in New York: editors, clergymen, statesmen, lawyers, merchants, critics. They were all very curious to hear him. His fame as a powerful speaker had preceded him, and exaggerated rumor of his wit—the worst forerunner of an orator—had reached the East. When Mr. Bryant presented him, on the high platform of the Cooper Institute, a vast sea of eager upturned faces greeted him, full of intense curiosity to see what this rude child of the people was like. He was equal to the occasion. When he spoke he was transformed; his eye kindled, his voice rang, his face shone and seemed to light up the whole assembly. For an hour and a half he held his audience in the hollow of his hand. His style of speech and manner of delivery were severely simple. What Lowell called "The grand simplicities of the Bible," with which he was so familiar, were reflected in his discourse. With no attempt at ornament or rhetoric, without parade or pretence, he spoke straight to the point. If any came expecting the turbid eloquence or the ribaldry of the frontier, they must have been startled at the

earnest and sincere purity of his utterances.

Before turning to Mr. Whitelaw Reid's memories of Lincoln we ought to say that all Mr. Choate's addresses give just the facts about each subject which English readers would wish to know. Thus in the Lincoln address he did not forget to give such essential examples of Lincoln's wonderful power over words as are to be found in the Gettysburg speech, in the Second Inaugural, and in the famous letter to a mother who had lost five sons in the war.

Mr. Whitelaw Reid says of Lincoln:—

I had the honor of knowing Mr. Lincoln a little before his nomination for the Presidency; in fact, of having been among the first, if not the first, of Republican editors outside his State to propose his nomination in preference to our own State candidate. The acquaintance thus formed never of course became intimate—I was only an unimportant boy; but he was always kind to me, and I continued to see him from time to time till I sat near his bier in the White House, and afterwards watched from the roof of the Treasury the long procession pass through Pennsylvania Avenue and up the Capitol Hill—the ever-renewed procession, that lasted for a fortnight, that swept great cities into its ranks, and crossed half the country, to lay him at last at rest, amid the scenes of his youthful struggles and triumphs.

Lincoln's story is already a legend, and, like all legends, it suffers from an enormous accretion of irrelevancies and untruths. Mr. Whitelaw Reid, without in any sense detracting from the glory of his subject—he places him far above Mazzini, Gambetta, and Bismarck—desires to correct some of these. He finds that Lincoln has become a kind of ikon for every sort of sentimentalist and faddist. They invoke his name in support of causes which he never mentioned, and in

which it is inconceivable that he could have believed. To begin with, Mr. Whitelaw Reid insists—what indeed is understood but is too often forgotten—that Lincoln did not answer a summons to save the State, meaning to retire to the blessed but obscure life of an ordinary citizen, like some Cincinnatus; rather from his early manhood he was “a persistent office-seeker and the most ambitious of men.” We should remember, however, that in those days, even more than now, the whole atmosphere of American politics was heavy with the spirit of office-seeking. When a new President took up his residence at the White House the population of Washington temporarily almost doubled; the printing trade of the capital had a great stimulus from the mere business of printing testimonials. This explains, if it does not ultimately justify, what Mr. Whitelaw Reid says was Lincoln's method in making appointments when he himself became President, and in managing elections rather in the manner of a French prefect:—

He had small regard for many of the refinements of the modern Civil Service reformer. He knew how to use the Post Offices to secure delegates, and he was ready enough to point out to his Congressman how a judicious use of other patronage would promote the good cause at the next Convention. When he came to great place he still used patronage without hesitation,—to advance high public interests, to gain support for the Union cause, to quiet discontent, to promote recruiting. Honesty he insisted on, but beyond that his official standard was not always the highest, and his judgment of individual character not always safe. Thus, in the haste, he appointed many incompetent officers in the army and elsewhere, and often tolerated inefficiency after others had discovered it.

We think the implication of the last sentence might mislead. Of all the

charges against Lincoln, the most familiar was that he used unnecessarily to interfere with his generals. A civilian Commander-in-Chief is peculiarly exposed to such a charge, but time has exonerated Lincoln. Is it not probable that his tolerance of inefficiency was simply a sign that he was avoiding with deliberation and patience this very danger into which circumstances tempted him to run?

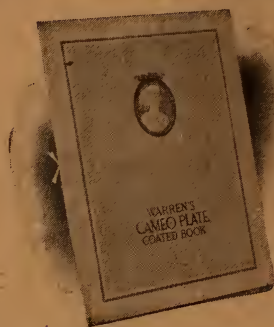
In respect of Lincoln's anecdotes, Mr. Whitelaw Reid tried to correct a common impression. We have all heard of the anecdotes, and perhaps most of us—the present writer certainly has done so—have come to think of Lincoln's faculty of firing them off partly as a weapon with which he turned aside, by an engaging digression, the inconvenient overtures of office-seekers, and partly as a cordial with which he recaptured his good spirits or deadened the oppressive sense of overwhelming responsibility. We have heard it said that office-seekers knew that if Lincoln told them an anecdote the desiderated office was not to be theirs; and we have certainly read of Lincoln discharging jokes at a moment when the Union was in its direst peril, and it was touch and go whether the Confederates would not be in possession of the Capitol itself within a few hours. If such stories are true they are, of course, no proof whatever of levity. But Mr. Whitelaw Reid believes apparently that anecdotes did not serve Lincoln exactly in the way we have supposed. He says:—

He was always the life of every country tavern where he stayed, and his stories on the circuit were as
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eagerly awaited by the Bench and Bar as the regular sessions of the Court. Yet at the most critical periods of his life this incessant story-teller was the victim of such melancholia that his friends feared for his reason; always, when not in animated conversation, he was the most melancholy looking of men. In the White House, and under the anxieties of the Civil War, he was naturally still more gloomy. To regard this highest and saddest statesman of the century as a mere professional wearer of the cap and bells—to take this sacred name as a convenient decoration for some popular humorist, or for a "joke-smith by trade," to eulogize some such one as "the Abraham Lincoln of American literature"—that is the last indignity from the sentimental school which he distrusted in life, and which thus belittles his blood-earned laurels.

Although Mr. Whitelaw Reid diverges in details from the common view of Lincoln, both he and Mr. Choate, of course, reach the same conclusion. Mr. Choate emphasizes the value of Lincoln's legal experience much more than is usual in the biographies. We must not quote further, but will end by saying that we hope that every American Ambassador will bring with him to England some contribution to the study of Lincoln. Yet Lincoln's picture will never be complete.

Walt Whitman wrote in his lecture on the details of Lincoln:—"Four sorts of genius, four mighty and primal hands, will be needed to complete the limning of this man's future portrait—the eyes and brains and finger-touch of Plutarch and Æschylus and Michelangelo, assisted by Rabelais."



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